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26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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TASK FORCE

**Congress of the United States**  
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June 26, 2017

Hon. Helen M. Albert  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20410

**RE: Request for a review of federal funding at the vacant, eastern, section of Perry Homes,  
Buffalo, NY**

Dear General Albert:

I am concerned by the deplorable condition of the abandoned easternmost 172 units of the Commodore Perry Homes operated by the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA) in Buffalo, NY, which is entirely vacant now and has been largely vacant for at least a decade. Over the years the BMHA invested substantial federal resources in the operation and maintenance of these facilities. Now, this authority is holding these properties vacant, despite the fact that viable redevelopment options exist. I am informed by law enforcement that these vacant structures have become a haven for persons involved in the drug trade and other illegal activities. Perpetuating this widespread vacancy and abandonment which is a catalyst for crime is injurious to the neighbors in the remaining, western portion of the Perry Homes, and the neighbors who do not reside in this complex.

I write to request that the Office of Inspector General undertake an accounting of the federal funds which were invested in these facilities (Buildings 11, 12, 14, 16-20, 38, 38, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48) before and during their vacancy to determine the extent to which federal resources have been used to perpetuate this blight on the surrounding community.

For context, it is important to understand that the BMHA is, objectively speaking, poorly managed, according to the empirical measures employed by HUD to evaluate the efforts of the nation's approximately 3,000 public housing agencies. These scores are based on financial metrics, physical inspections of the housing itself, the vacancy rate, and other indicators of

management quality. In 2015, the last year for which there is yet complete data, the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority ranked in the bottom 3% of public housing authorities nationally.

There is a great deal of frustration among those living in the Perry neighborhood. Given the many vulnerable members of the community that BMHA serves – most notably seniors, children, and those with disabilities – this record of poor management and the perpetuation of this blight is particularly troubling. These residents deserve to live in dignity.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "B" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress